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given a steam bath in the house. In a special oblong wooden bathing bowl (*kumete ni silisili*) are placed cut *waro* leaves. A hot stone is put on the leaves and the infant is held over the steam by one of the *songone*. When the leaves cease to give forth steam, the child is washed in water. This bath is to clean and heal the navel. No men are allowed in the house during the process.

The most important birth feast is the *i mburua ni ngone*, which is usually held on the first or second day after the birth of any child. It may, however, be held on any day up to the tenth. This feast for a first-born, whether boy or girl, is larger and more elaborate than that for a subsequent child. The earth ovens of the father's and the mother's clans are used, but for subsequent children only the oven of the father's clan. If the family is prominent, the birth feast is large and attended by the whole village, if not the feast is attended by near relatives only. The birth feast of a child born out of wedlock is small. It is provided and attended by the mother's clan only.

Twins are desirable in Lau. Twin boys are called *ndrua tamata*; twin girls, *ndrua aleva*.

If a child is stillborn (*suthu mate*) the body is kept near the mother for three or four nights, for it would be harmful to the mother to take it away sooner. She would grieve and become ill with a sickness called *tandoka*, characterized by fainting, body pains, and sleeplessness. Stillbirths are buried in the cemetery above a previous burial from the same clan. The destiny of the souls of stillbirths is not clear to the natives. If both mother and child die they are wrapped in one funeral bundle and buried in the same grave. Their souls go to Nai Thimbathimba (p. 114). In miscarriage the foetus is kept two nights and then buried in the cemetery without ceremony.

When the child is born the father moves out of the house and sleeps in a men's house belonging to his clan until the child is weaned. Sexual intercourse with his wife is tabu during this period, but the father frequently has clandestine affairs with the women of the village who do not stand in the tabu relationship with him.

Feces of the infant are wrapped in tapa and kept in an excrement basket (*kato nda*) which hangs on the wall of the house where the child lives. This is done because they are a part of the child and removing them would cause the child to have diarrhea. For the first child the basket must be kept 100 days, after which the father throws it over the reef into the sea. The spot where it sinks is marked with a tabu stick. Nobody may fish there until the ceremony, called *mangitehi ni ona singa*, is held when the child is one year old. If the father erects a tabu stick he is obliged to give a big feast when the tabu is lifted. The feast adds to his prestige and to that of the child. If the parents cannot provide food for a big feast, they simply throw the basket into the sea without declaring a tabu. The excrement basket for a subsequent offspring need be kept only until the child shows he is gaining strength, usually two

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mines by touch whether the unborn child is correctly placed. 844
If not she manipulates it by massage into the proper position at the beginning of labor.

In a normal delivery the woman in labor sits with legs apart and knees slightly bent on a flat stone covered with barkcloth. She supports herself by propping her arms against the mat behind her, and she is held from behind by one of the attendant women. The midwife sits in front of her and slowly rubs her abdomen. If the delivery is difficult the 845
woman lies on her back. In cases of prolonged labor a medicine woman known for her skill and success in midwifery is called in from the village or from a neighboring village. She takes charge of the delivery and administers her own brand of medicine.

A difficult birth or subsequent complications are believed to be the result of broken tabus on the part of the mother or father. It is usually assumed by the men of the husband's clan that his wife has committed adultery. Instead of consolation, therefore, she receives reproaches from her husband's male relatives. The women, on the other hand, are sympathetic for they all agree that adultery does not influence the process of birth.

The midwife catches the infant as he emerges. If he is short 844
of breath she blows water from her mouth into his face, or she gives a cup of water to the mother and massages the umbilical cord gently with thumb and index finger. If the mother is faint the midwife gives her "medicine to restore her breath", made according to her private recipe. When the child is breathing regularly the umbilical cord is cut by the mother's mother or the midwife. This was formerly done with a shell or a bamboo knife. The method, introduced by [177]
the government, of cutting the cord with a pair of scissors and tying it with a piece of string, is used occasionally. An old Fulanga woman thinks that the modern method of tying the cord is injurious because the bad blood cannot flow away. As

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If the child is born dead the body is kept near the mother for three or four nights. It would be harmful to the mother to take it way sooner. She would grieve and become ill with a sickness characterized by fainting, body pains, and sleeplessness. Still births are buried in the village cemetery above a previous burial from the same clan. If both mother and child die they are wrapped in one funeral bundle and buried in one grave. Formerly the natives believed that their souls went to Nai Thimbathimba, the jumping off place for the souls of the departed.

As a rule the father does not see the child before it is "on the mat". He usually bathes and puts on a clean *lavalava* before entering the house. The child is presented to him by his mother or by his wife's mother. He breathes upon him through his nose, the only native method of kissing, holds him for a moment, and returns him without a word.

For several months after the child is born the father sleeps in the men's house of his clan or in his father's house. Formerly he slept in another house until the child was weaned, and some men observe this custom today. Intercourse with his wife is tabu until the child is weaned, lest the child get a sickness called *ndambe* (pronounced en-dam'-bē), or the mother become pregnant. A man who breaks the tabu is called "expert at causing *ndambe*". A child with this illness cannot walk, but crawls on all fours with feet flat on the ground. If a woman becomes pregnant while she is nursing, people blame her husband because her milk will become "bad" and harm the suckling child. The tabu against intercourse is occasionally broken today, but apparently not often, for practically all children in any one family are at least 18 months apart. The husband is supposed to be continent during this period, but he usually has clandestine affairs with women who do not stand in the tabu relationship to him.

The child is named on the day of birth by the father's mother after a member, usually an ancestor, of the clan. If the parents are very fond of a child they give him several